

REMARKS:

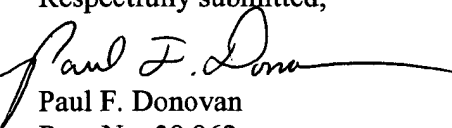
At the time of the Office Action, claims 9, 11, 13 and 21-27 were pending. Claims 9, 11, 13, 21, 22 and 25 stand rejected. Claims 23, 24, 26 and 27 have been found to contain allowable subject matter. Pursuant to this Amendment, claims 23-27 have been amended, new claim 28 has been added, and claims 21-22 have been cancelled. Claims 9, 11, 13 and 23-28 remain pending in the subject application.

Claims 9, 11, 13, 21-22 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mori et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,895,094). Claims 23-24 and 26-27 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, without agreeing with the Examiner as to what is or is not taught by Mori et al., claims 23-24 and 26-27 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claims 21 and 22, respectively. Accordingly, claims 23-24 and 26-27 are allowable. Amended claim 25 depends from claim 23 and new claim 28 depends from claim 24, thereby making these claims allowable for the same reasons applied thereto.

In regards to claim 9, the Examiner notes that Mori et al. provide that the two sleeves are rigidly interconnected to each other adjacent upper and lower ends of the sleeves. However, pursuant to the Examiner's amendment mailed April 9, 2003 and the interview dated March 25, 2003, claim 9 was amended to further recite that the sleeves are rigidly interconnected to each other adjacent upper and lower ends in a fixed parallel relationship by a plurality of rigid struts extending between the two sleeves. Since at least this limitation is not found in Mori et al., claim 9 is not anticipated by Mori et al. Claims 11 and 13 depend from claim 9 and, therefore, are allowable for the same reasons applied thereto.

Reconsideration of the rejected claims and allowance of all of the remaining pending claims is respectfully requested. In the event that the Examiner continues to hold that all of the claims are not in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned at the number indicated below to discuss this case in greater detail.

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Respectfully submitted,

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